

March 24, 1967

C. Willard Heckel, Esq.
Dean, Rutgers University Law School
180 Plane Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Dean Heckel:

I herewith submit my resignation as a member of the Board of Trustees of the United Community Corporation to be effective as of March 28, 1967.

It distresses me to have to take this action, but I completely disagree with the manner in which the affairs of the Corporation are being conducted that I no longer see any useful purpose in remaining on the Board.

I was shocked to read that the Executive Committee had authorized the highly publicized meeting at a resort hotel in West Orange for the staff of the Corporation. Surely, the very nature of the work of the Corporation, e.g., to combat poverty, should have precluded a meeting at such a locale.

In my opinion, the latest proposed program for the disposition of funds and the priorities established therefor by the United Community Corporation constitute a complete emasculation of the basic purpose of the anti-poverty war, e.g., to directly help the deserving poor in Newark, most of whom are Negroes and Puerto Ricans.

The United Community Corporation, as I see it, is now blatantly demonstrating that its policies are being dictated by a small, affluent coterie of pseudo-liberals and pseudo-intellectuals who, consciously or unconsciously, appear to be more interested in perpetuating poverty in Newark than attempting to eradicate it. The policy seems to be one in which crocodile tears are shed for the poor, with a crumb being thrown to them here and there, while the bulk of anti-poverty money is allocated for an excessive number of administrative jobs, not only in the central administration of the United Community Corporation itself, but, more particularly, in the approved projects themselves where the poor should be receiving the most assistance. This constitutes a form of patronage, calculated, in my opinion, to serve the purposes of the ruling clique

5

C. Willard Heckel, Esq.
March 24, 1967
Page 2

of the United Community Corporation in building a bureaucratic political machine at the expense of deserving poor Negroes and Puerto Ricans for whom the funds were designated in this city by Congressional appropriation.

How can this diversion of funds to relatively affluent individuals help the less fortunate in Newark to help themselves in attempting to rise from the frustrations of the miserable ghettos which most certainly infest Newark and constitute what should be the number one concern of all citizens in this city?

The outrageous attempt to take a huge sum of money from the established successful Senior Citizen project and divert it to the relatively unsuccessful Area Board project on the spurious premise that the Senior Citizen project is not a multi-purpose community action program, despite the fact that it is so classified by the Office of Economic Opportunity, is a typical example of this power grab by the ruling clique of the United Community Corporation. What can be more cruel than to deprive so many of our elderly poor of a chance to give meaning to this period of their lives and to give them a chance to live in dignity without resort to public welfare.

Likewise, the cutting in half of funds for the Leaguers, an organization which pioneered in self help for youth long before the United Community Corporation or the so-called anti-poverty program was even thought of, is another shocking example of the dictatorial powers of the United Community Corporation hierarchy. An example of the success of the Leaguers program is the recent appointment of Tyrone Brown as law assistant to Chief Justice Warren. Likewise, the tremendous international success of singing star Dionne Warwick. I can cite hundreds of other successful young Negroes who were part of the Leaguer program. When will we ever learn that the poor want nothing more than an equal opportunity to help themselves?

It is no disgrace to be poor, as those of us who came from poor families well know, but it is a disgrace to this city that our less fortunate citizens cannot properly be given the opportunity to help themselves.

I know that the answer I will be given to these criticisms is that there has been a sharp cutback in funds for the anti-poverty

(5)

C. Willard Heckel, Esq.
March 24, 1967
Page 3

program in Newark. I am well aware of this and I was, as you know, in the forefront of the fight by Timothy Still and Willie Wright for an increase in these funds. However, this does not alter the fact that there is an actual increase of \$56,000 in funds for the Area Boards in Newark, who have yet to prove their effectiveness, while funds are slashed for meaningful programs such as the Senior Citizens, Blazers, Focus, and the Leaguers.

Any citizen or group of citizens in Newark, regardless of race, creed, or color, has a legitimate right to aspire to political power. No citizen or group of citizens has the right to use anti-poverty funds for such political purposes, whether such use originates in projects supervised by the power structure of the United Community Corporation, or by the power structure of the City Administration.

Such action is nothing more than a despicable diversion of funds from the poor who, to use an old cliché, get poorer all the time.

One of the favorite expressions of the ruling clique at the United Community Corporation is "slicing up the pie". The program being foisted upon the poor Negroes and Puerto Ricans of this city "slices up the pie" by giving the biggest "bite" to the patronage positions controlled by the power structure of the United Community Corporation and leaves nothing but crumbs for the deserving poor of this city.

I feel very strongly that I cannot be a part of this sell-out of the poor.

I am fully aware of the tremendous amount of time which you have given on a voluntary basis to your position as President. It seems a pity to me that you have permitted yourself to lend your approval to the actions contemplated.

I shall continue to do what little I can as an individual citizen to help alleviate the disgraceful conditions which exist among the poor in Newark. I no longer feel that conditions such

C. Willard Heckel, Esq.

March 24, 1967

Page 4

as these can be corrected by the type of leadership being exhibited by the power structure of the United Community Corporation.

Very sincerely yours,

GJH:mk

George J. Haney